IN THE CLAIMS

For the convenience of the Examiner, all pending claims of the present Application are shown below in numerical order whether or not an amendment has been made and applying the revised amendment practice of 37 CFR 1.121 – IFW Final Rule.

1. (Currently amended) A midplane, comprising:

a printed circuit board;

a first communication coupling coupled with the printed circuit board and configured to receive a first computing device;

a second communication coupling coupled with the printed circuit board and configured to receive a second computing device;

a master signal control module coupled with the first and second communication couplings;

wherein the master signal control module is operable to communicate control signals to the second communication coupling if the first computing device is not coupled with the first communication coupling; and

wherein the master signal control module prevents communication of the control signals to the second communication coupling if the first computing device ~~is not coupled~~ is coupled with the first communication coupling.

2. (Original) The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the first communication coupling includes trace wiring at least partially embedded within the printed circuit board.

3. (Original) The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the first computing device comprises a server processing card.

4. (Original) The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the second computing device is coupled with a network interface card operable to couple the first computing device with a network.

5. (Original) The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the master signal control module is operable to communicate the control signals to the first communication coupling if the first computing device is coupled with the first communication coupling.

6. (Currently amended) The midplane of Claim 1, further comprising:

a third communication coupling coupled with the printed circuit board and configured to receive a third computing device; and

wherein the master signal control module is operable to communicate control signals to the third communication coupling only if the first and second computing devices are not coupled with the first and second communication couplings, respectively.

7. (Original) The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the master signal control module is operable to prevent communication of the control signals to the third communication coupling if the first computing device is coupled with the first communication coupling or the second computing device is coupled with the second communication coupling.

8. (Currently amended) The midplane of Claim 1, wherein the master signal control module comprises a plurality of diodes and resistors operable to perform logic which determines ~~the path of the communication signals~~ a path of the control signals.

9. (Original) A server chassis, comprising:

a midplane printed circuit board having first and second connectors configured to receive first and second server processing cards, respectively;

at least a first server processing card coupled with the first connector;

a master signal control module coupled with the midplane printed circuit board;

the master signal control module being operable to communicate control signals to the first server processing card if the second server processing is not coupled with the second connector; and

wherein the master signal control module is operable to prevent communication of the control signals to the first server processing card if the second server processing card is coupled with the second connector.

10. (Original) A method for controlling a plurality of hardware components, comprising:

monitoring first and second connectors coupled with a midplane to detect the presence of first and second computing devices, respectively;

transmitting master control signals to the second computing device if the first computing device is not coupled with the first connector; and

preventing the transmission of the master control signals to the second computing device if the first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 10, further comprising transmitting the master control signals to the first computing device if the first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

12. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 10, further comprising:

monitoring a third connector coupled with the midplane to detect the presence of a third computing device; and

transmitting the control signals to the third communication device only if the first and second computing devices are not coupled with the first and second connectors, respectively.

13. (Original) A computer readable medium encoded with logic operable to:

monitor first and second connector coupled with a midplane to detect the presence of first and second computing devices, respectively;

transmit master control signals to the second computing device if the first computing device is not coupled with the first connector; and

prevent the transmission of the master control signals to the second computing device if the first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

14. (Original) The computer readable medium of Claim 13, wherein the logic is further operable to transmit the master control signals to the first computing device if the first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

15. (Currently amended) The computer readable medium of Claim 13, wherein the logic is further operable to:

monitor a third connector coupled with the midplane to detect the presence of a third computing device; and

transmit the control signals to the third communication device only if the first and second computing devices are not coupled with the first and second connectors, respectively.

16. (Original) A system, comprising:

means for monitoring first and second connectors coupled with a midplane to detect the presence of first and second computing devices, respectively;

means for transmitting master control signals to the second computing device if the first computing device is not coupled with the first connector; and

means for preventing the transmission of the master control signals to the second computing device if the first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

17. (Original) The system of Claim 16, further comprising transmitting the master control signals to the first computing device if the first computing device is coupled with the first connector.

18. (Currently amended) The system of Claim 16, further comprising:

monitoring a third connector coupled with the midplane to detect the presence of a third computing device; and

transmitting the control signals to the third communication device only if the first and second computing devices are not coupled with the first and second connectors, respectively.